

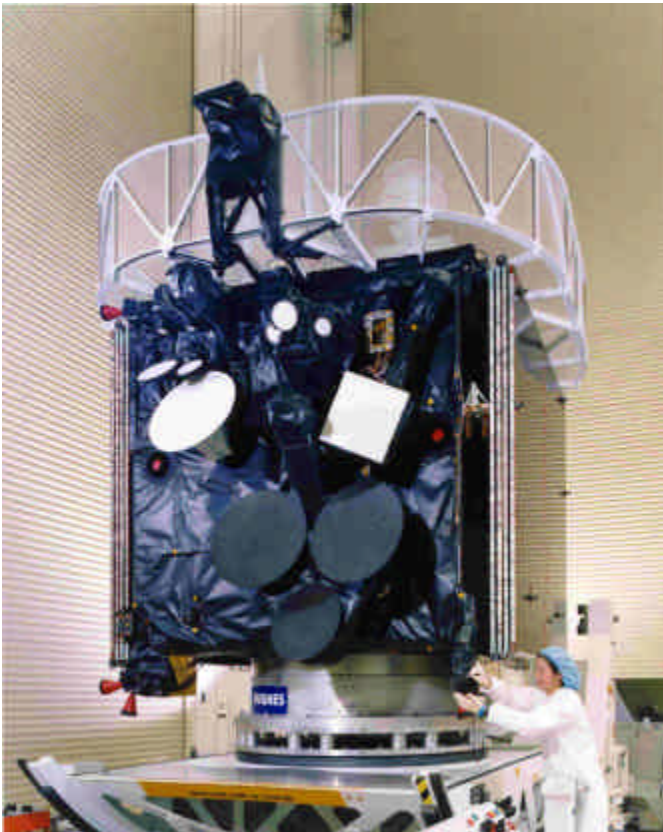


News Release

Public Affairs and Corporate Communications Office
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For Immediate Release
March 2, 1998
News Release 1998-005

Atlas Rocket to Launch Navy UHF Follow-On Satellite



The Navy UHF Follow-On Satellite F8 is prepared for shipment to Cape Canaveral Air Station for mating with the launch vehicle. Hughes Space and Communication Company photograph.

SAN DIEGO -- The Navy's eighth UHF Follow-On (UFO) communications satellite is scheduled for launch March 16th at 4:22 p.m. EST from launch pad 36A at Cape Canaveral Air Station, Florida.

Hughes Space and Communications Company in El Segundo, Calif., built the satellite for the US Navy and will launch it on a Lockheed Martin Atlas II launch vehicle. The UFO program is managed by the Program Executive Officer for Space, Communications and Sensors, PMW-146 in San Diego. The Atlas launch vehicle is manufactured in San Diego, Denver, and Harlingen, Texas.

The UHF Follow-On satellite system provides global communications for the Department of Defense through satellites in geosynchronous orbit. UFO was developed to replace the Fleet Communications Satellite (FLTSAT) and Leased Communications Satellite (LEASAT) assets as they reach the end of their useful lives. The UHF Follow-On constellation will consist of eight satellites that will provide communications over the USA, the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans and one on-orbit spare.

UHF Follow-On satellite F8 will be the first of these spacecraft with the Global Broadcast Service (GBS) communications system. Global Broadcast Service

provides a means for rapidly disseminating large quantities of information to small, mobile users. The GBS payload will provide four 24 Mbps Ka-band transponders, three steerable downlink spot beams, and one steerable and one fixed uplink receive antenna. After on-orbit testing is completed, satellite F8 will be moved to its operational location over the Pacific Ocean at 172 degrees East. The UHF Follow-On satellites F9 and F10, which will also have the GBS system, will follow in the next year, completing the UHF Follow-On coverage of GBS services.

The Navy communications satellite will be launched by Lockheed Martin Astronautics in cooperation with the Air Force Space Command's 45th Space Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. The 45th Space Wing operates the Eastern Range -- playing a vital role in all launches by providing essential and critical range, ground and mission support.

After the launch, Hughes and the Air Force Space Command at Falcon Air Force Base, Colorado, will establish communications with the satellite and perform early operations testing and on-orbit testing. The 3rd Space Operations Squadron performs Telemetry, Tracking, and Command functions for the constellation until turnover of these tasks to the Naval Satellite Operations Center at Point Mugu in 1999. The Program Executive Office for Space, Communications and Sensors, PMW-146 has managed the entire acquisition of this constellation from contract development, through system design, test, and launch, and is now planning for the future of Navy satellite communications.

In July 1988, the U.S. Navy chose the Hughes Space and Communications Company HS 601 for its UHF Follow-On communications satellite program. The first successful launch was in September 1993, the second in June 1994. Three were launched successfully in 1995 in January, May, and October. UHF F/O F7 was launched in July 1996. An earlier launch, in March 1993, left a satellite in the wrong orbit. Altogether, the Navy has placed orders for 10 spacecraft. The contract calls for a 10-year service life. The new satellites replace the Fleet Satellite Communications and Hughes-built Leasat satellites currently supporting the Navy's global communications network serving ships at sea and a variety of other U.S. military fixed and mobile terminals. The new spacecraft are compatible with ground- and sea-based communications terminals already in service. They use the same frequency spectrum as the current constellation but with an increased number of transmitters, providing an increase in communications capacity. The last three satellites will carry an additional payload that the Defense Department plans to use for an interim Global Broadcast Service. GBS will support the full range of the Defense Department's high-capacity communications requirements, from intelligence dissemination to quality-of-life programming.

News Media Advisory:

A Pre-Launch Press Conference is planned for Saturday, March 14th in Cocoa Beach. Additional information will be provided after plans are finalized. Accredited News Media Representatives who wish to attend the launch of the UHF Follow-On satellite from Cape Canaveral Air Station should contact the 45th Space Wing Public Affairs Office at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida at 407-494-5933.

For More Information Contact

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45th Space Wing Office of Public Affairs 407-494-5933

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Last update: Thursday, December 07, 2000